

Reflections

reading notes

OCTOBER 2005—*Wisdom and Folly*

The interplay between the images of wisdom and folly are fascinating in Scripture. One's self-assessment, we learn, is not always accurate. For example, Paul writes of the Gentiles, "Claiming to be wise they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles" (Rom. 1:22, 23).

In the 1 Corinthian letter, Paul writes, "for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1:25). And, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1:27). Of course, the ones Paul sometimes refers to as "wise" are so only in their own conceits. They think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Rom. 12:3).

The point of 1 Corinthians 1 & 2 is that the world through its wisdom could have never conceived what God had in mind where the scheme of redemption is concerned. His plan to save man is described as the wisdom of God, "not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age" (2:6). God's plan fits into the category of things "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined" (2:9).

Solomon warns his son, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (Prov 3:5). He tells him that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and it is the fool who despises wisdom and instruction (1:7). "Get wisdom" he tells his son, for it is the principle thing (4:7).

It is no wonder why the value of wisdom is extolled as worth more than silver, gold, precious jewels, or anything to which you can compare it. This world is filled with booby traps for the high minded—those wise in their own conceits. George MacDonald, writes, "...indeed the business of the universe is to make such a fool of you that you will know yourself for one, and so begin to be wise!" (*Lillith*, p. 38).

